



## National Monitoring Conference 2002

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### *Building a Framework for the Future*

### **About the *National Water Quality Monitoring Council***

The National Water Quality Monitoring Council (the Council) was created in 1997. It has thirty-five members and several alternate members — a balanced representation of federal, interstate, state, tribal, local and municipal governments; watershed and environmental groups; the volunteer monitoring community; universities; and the private sector, including the regulated community. The Council is co-chaired by the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Council is chartered under the Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI) under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. It meets a minimum of three times a year in locations throughout the country.

***The Council provides a national forum to coordinate consistent and scientifically defensible water quality monitoring methods and strategies.***

The Council provides a national forum for coordinating consistent and scientifically defensible methods and strategies to improve water quality monitoring, assessment and reporting. The Council promotes partnerships to foster collaboration, advance the science, and improve management within all elements of the water quality monitoring community, as well as to heighten public awareness, public involvement, and stewardship of our water resources.

#### **Our challenge**

The importance of clean, safe water cannot be underestimated. Each year government agencies, industry, academia and private organizations devote enormous amounts of

time, energy, and money to monitor, protect, manage, and restore water resources and watersheds. Critical differences in project design, methods, data analysis, and data management have often made it difficult for monitoring information and results to be shared and used by all. Protecting and restoring waterways and watersheds is dependent upon detailed, understandable, easily accessible data and information. The 1999 Clean Water Action Plan put the focus on collaboration and comparability and charges federal agencies to: "Establish compatible data standards, resource classifications, inventory methods and protocols to allow the sharing of ecological, resource condition, land use and monitoring information among federal and other stakeholder groups."

#### **Our strategy**

National goals are formulated and carried out through Council meetings and working groups. Results are shared at biennial conferences to ensure that feedback from constituents helps to shape the Council's workplan and activities. The Council has a number of goals, each with an active work group, whose broad membership expands the expertise of the Council. They are:

- ***Water Information Strategies***  
Create and communicate goal-oriented monitoring design guidance that results in comparable information, over time

and space, being produced in support of management decision making.

- **Methods and Data Comparability**  
Explore, evaluate and develop methods and approaches to measurement that facilitate collaboration and promote comparability between water quality monitoring programs.
- **Collaboration and Outreach**  
Build and support creative partnerships among the many elements of the monitoring community, particularly by supporting the development of state and regional monitoring councils, and to provide support so that Council members can serve as ambassadors to heighten the awareness and involvement of all stakeholders in water resource monitoring, protection, and restoration.
- **Watershed Components Interactions**  
Provide a national forum to advance the integration of ground and surface water

monitoring to more fully understand the connected nature of these watershed components and their combined impact on the ecological integrity of the hydrologic system.

## National conferences

In July 1998, the Council held its first national conference in Reno, Nevada. Over 400 people attended that conference, titled *Monitoring: Critical Foundations to Protect Our Waters*. The 2000 conference in Austin, Texas, *Monitoring for the Millennium*, was designed to build on the critical foundations of discussion, networking, and exploration that were the hallmarks of the Reno conference. The attendance increased by fifty percent with over 600 participants! The 2002 Conference, *Building a Framework for the Future*, is organized around a monitoring framework that attempts to coordinate consistent and scientifically defensible strategies that will improve water quality monitoring, assessment and reporting.

*We invite you to join us in making this conference an opportunity for each of us to share our experiences and explore the issues and steps needed to build a monitoring framework for the future!*

## National Water Quality Monitoring Council Members and Alternates (A)

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Charles Spooner, NWQMC Co-chair, USEPA  
Mary Ambrose, Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission  
Clifford Annis, Merck & Company  
Bill Backous, Washington Dept. of Ecology  
Fred Banach, Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection  
Herb Brass, USEPA  
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*To learn more about the Council, visit our website at*  
<http://water.usgs.gov/wicp/acwi/monitoring/>